

Minutes of Land Use, Parks and Environment Committee
Tuesday, June 3, 2008

Chair Ruf called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Committee Present: Supervisors Fritz Ruf (Chair), Janel Brandtjen, James Jeskewitz, Walter Kolb (arrived at 8:31 a.m.), Ted Rolfs and Gilbert Yerke. **Absent:** Supervisor Robert Hutton.

Also Present: Legislative Policy Advisor Mark Mader, and Legislative Associate Karen Phillips, Financial Analyst Bill Duckworth, Dale Shaver, Perry Lindquist, Andrew Thelke, Duane Grimm, Supervisor John Pledl.

Kolb arrived at 8:31 a.m.

Approve Minutes of May 20, 2008

Yerke moved, second by Jeskewitz, to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2008, meeting. Motion carried 6-0.

Executive Committee Report

The June 2, 2008, Executive Committee meeting was cancelled.

Meeting Approvals

Ruf requested to attend the Waukesha County Action Network annual meeting on June 25, 2008, at the Marcus Majestic Theater: Alternative Funding for Transportation.

MOTION: Brandtjen moved, second by Jeskewitz, to approve Committee members attendance at the Waukesha County Action Network annual meeting on June 25, 2008. Motion carried: 6-0.

Mader suggested a motion to approve attendance at the SE Area Land & Water Conservation Association meetings. This would include the Committee member chosen to be the representative as well as Committee members who wish to attend the annual conservation bus tour in the fall.

Ruf moved, second by Jeskewitz, to approve Committee members attendance at the the SE Area Land & Water Conservation Association meetings. Motion carried 6-0.

Future Meeting Dates

- June 17, 2008

Overview of the Parks and Land Use Department and Introduction of Staff: Parks System and Enterprise Operations

Shaver began with an overview of the statistical facts, functions and financial summary of the Parks System. He introduced Grimm, who has been the Parks Systems Manager since early 2007.

Grimm presented a PowerPoint presentation of the Parks Systems operations. Grimm explained their responsibilities include the acquisition of park and open space land throughout the County, planning for new parks and existing park enhancements, daily operation of facilities and park recreation programs. He stated it is their goal to keep 70% of the park areas natural and 30% used for recreational activities such as picnics, beaches and swimming. Recreational and educational opportunities are provided, including swimming and kayaking lessons in cooperation with municipalities. County policy requires the Park System to cover 30% of their operating expenses through related revenues.

Grimm stated that the Park System consists of 3,675 acres of developed park land. There are eight major parks of 250 acres or more. The Park System also includes Retzer Nature Center, 30.5 miles of recreation

trails, five lake accesses, six swimming beaches and three golf courses.

Brandtjen suggested promotion of the parks and trails in the Journal-Sentinel and Freeman as ideas for family activities in the area, in light of the rising gas prices. Shaver stated there is a staff person who does all of the events and marketing work, and they hire a marketing intern to assist with special events and projects. Shaver explained that he has recently given the newspapers some ideas for stories. The Department also puts out activity guides and will be releasing a bike trail map in the next few weeks. The information is also available on the county website, as well as at waukeshacountyparks.com.

Yerke asked if the County has considered purchasing the Rainbow Springs property in Mukwonago. Shaver stated he has enough knowledge about golf courses to know it would take too much money to make the necessary improvements on that property.

Grimm highlighted the volunteer programs in the Parks System, which have been very successful. He stated there are many volunteer activities scheduled throughout the year. Grimm specifically mentioned the Fox River Park cleanup by volunteers from Central Middle School and GE employees, which has been ongoing for about 16 years. Shaver stated his staff embraces the fact that there are volunteers willing to help with upkeep in the parks, doing things such as pulling weeds, planting, and cleanup.

Mader suggested that this might be the appropriate time to discuss the revenue issue associated with the parks.

Shaver explained that the Parks System has policy, set by the County Board, that 30% of our operating expenses should be collected through revenues at the parks, and 20% at Retzer Nature Center (because it is considered an educational facility which has free admission). Shaver stated he is not an advocate of a free park system, such as Milwaukee County's, because it is very challenging to balance costs and revenues solely on the backs of the taxpayers. The Parks System adds to the quality of life in Waukesha County. It provides a revenue stream to allow us to keep the parks in a condition that other communities struggle to achieve. Shaver stated there is no free use policy at all. He stated that he just recently learned that there were three entities granted free use of the parks in the past: Muskego Lions Club, Elmbrook Humane Society and HAWS. He stated that in talking to staff, he found that the Elmbrook Humane Society and HAWS were granted free use for a fundraiser with the indication that there would be a financial contribution toward the development of the dog park at Minooka Park, which did not happen.

Shaver explained that letters were sent out this year giving the three organizations a year advance notice that they would no longer have free use of the parks. Brandtjen questioned how much revenue is involved. Shaver said there is a per vehicle charge of \$2.50 on weekdays, \$5.00 on weekends, or \$25.00 for yearly sticker. Shaver stated he gets several calls per month from other non-profit organizations requesting free use of the parks, which are denied. Shaver stated this is a policy issue; it is up to the County Board to set such policies, and he would not advise changing the policy. Kolb supported Shaver's stand on this issue.

Public Comment

Supervisor Pledl appeared as a representative of the Muskego Lion's Club. He explained that the Muskego Lions Club has been granted free use of Muskego Park on the Saturday before Easter every year since 1964. This annual event is a tradition for many Muskego residents, at which the Lions Club distributes free candy to area children. This year, the Lions Club received a letter stating they would now be charged a \$75.00 fee and \$5.00 per visitor car. Pledl explained that only a two hour block of time is required for this event. In addition, the high school holds a fundraising event at the same time. He suggested a grandfather clause to allow the Muskego Lions to continue free use of Muskego Park.

Shaver acknowledged that although this has been going on for years without his knowledge, he is ultimately responsible for the department and so is addressing this issue now. Shaver suggested an option for the Muskego Lions would be to use one of the municipal parks, such as the Muskego Veterans Park, which is a free use park. Shaver stated the County would assist in getting the word out of the new location of the event for 2009.

Kolb stated that to other entities, it would appear that the Lions Club would be getting special treatment. He advised that the County Board should be careful not to set precedence, because it will always be used as an excuse for someone else to ask for the same treatment.

Shaver added that he needs to have additional parks staff working at such scheduled events, so in that way it is a business decision too.

Rolfs agreed, stating it is a policy decision. It is a good policy, and we must uphold the policy.

Mader advised that this item had come up at another committee, then at the Executive Committee where it was referred to the LUPE Committee.

Brandtjen asked if there is a specific price cap for a non-profit organization. Shaver explained that non-profit organizations already experience a lower rate than the public; however, there is no cap on the park entrance fee.

Ruf stated he was originally considering the grandfathering, but the high school fundraiser changes his perspective. It clouds the issue of the non-profit organization doing something strictly for the community as opposed to the non-profit organization letting another non-profit organization have a fundraiser. Allowing the fundraiser at the same time complicates this issue even more.

Pledl stated he understands the position of the Committee and the Parks System policy.

Jeskewitz stated he must agree with upholding the policy.

Yerke stated he would also support the staff in upholding this policy, especially in light of Shaver's offer of assistance in relocating the event to a municipal park.

Pledl stated he would accept the decision of the Committee and withdraw his request.

Enterprise Operations:

Thelke handed out an information packet including the following items:

- Score cards from the 3 County golf courses
- Kettle Moraine Curling Club event flyer
- 2008 Expo Center events flyer
- Taste of Summer brochure

Thelke presented an overview of the Enterprise Operations:

- Golf Courses (3)
- Exposition Center
- Ice Arenas (2)

Thelke stated that in total they generate about \$5.2 million in revenue and expenditures are about \$5.2 million. There is a tax levy of \$25,000 budgeted to partially offset the cost of the free public use of the

facility for County governmental operations and 4-H clubs. He stated in total there are about 50 employees, 18.5 of which are full time positions. Thelke also supervises the Food Service Coordinator position and the Parks Specialist Position, which are cross-divisional type positions that serve the Parks System, the Enterprise Operations, and the department as a whole.

Thelke reviewed the operations of the three County Golf Courses:

Moor Downs: This 9 hole course was established in 1915. The total rounds played in 2007 was 22000, which is somewhat low. He stated the gross revenue in 2007 totaled \$351,000, but the income after depreciation was factored out as a loss of \$159,000 at Moor Downs Golf Course. The clubhouse was remodeled and a grand opening was held in 2006. Thelke stated the participation at the course has been dropping for many years, most likely due to greater competition and the change in demographics in the City of Waukesha. Thelke stated they are trying to change the perception of Moor Downs by making it more of an entry point into golf, a place to learn the game. Moor Downs does serve a good purpose in that it introduces people to the game of golf. It is predominately used by juniors and seniors. In addition, it has two very good practice greens and a driving area, which are very popular. There are several programs run, including First Tee program, junior lessons, junior leagues, family day on Sunday afternoons and adult leagues with a more social atmosphere.

Wanaki Golf Course: This 18 hole course was established in 1970. Thelke explained the capital project planned for a new maintenance building, but after an issue with the architectural review board regarding style change, it drove up the price by a quarter of a million dollars. As a result the project was pulled. The player rounds were 44,400 in 2007. This course does not have a driving range or full food service. It is a relatively flat course that is very walkable. Thelke stated many seniors play this course, and many more 9 hole rounds (60%) are played versus 18 hole rounds. There is also a large number of youth playing at Wanaki golf course, in leagues and in lessons as well as high school play.

Nagawaukee Golf Course

There the majority of the rounds here (60%) are 18 hole rounds, so the revenue per round is much higher at Nagawaukee Golf Course, even though the total rounds played is comparable to Wanaki. It is a hilly course, so the golf cart revenues are also higher.

Ice Arenas

Thelke outlined the operations of the Eble and Nagawaukee Ice Arenas. He stated gross revenues in 2007 were almost \$1 million, with the loss on their operating income of \$64,000 in 2007; income after depreciation was \$74,200. There are 3,000 hours of contracted ice use per year, and 23,000 public skaters per year. Kolb asked if these numbers are going up or down. Thelke stated both numbers are going up, and they are working very hard on a variety of initiatives to increase the numbers. This includes lesson programs, learn to play youth hockey programs, curling club promotion, adult hockey leagues and working with other outside entities.

Kolb asked whether Nagawaukee (sand floor base) versus Eble (cement floor base) is more cost effective. Thelke stated Eble is slightly more cost effective because of the way the refrigeration system works. Eble's compressor is 20 years old and uses a direct Freon system, but these types of systems have since been phased out. Nagawaukee may also be a bit less efficient because it is a much larger sheet of ice. Ruf asked whether figure skating is accommodated at the Ice Arenas. Thelke stated there are two clubs that rent the facilities, as well as professionals who teach during the public skates. There is also a senior skate group at Eble who perform routines and skate competitively.

Thelke stated that Eble will celebrate its 20-year anniversary this year, and there would be events planned to mark this anniversary.

Exposition Center

Thelke stated the Exposition Center grounds is a 165-acre site with an arena, exposition halls and a horse complex. He stated the average revenue for paid events is \$4300. He stated the value of free events at the Expo Center total about \$73,000, which is primarily 4-H and governmental public hearings. Kolb noted that the 4-H has free use of the building because they participated in donations for having it built in the beginning. Thelke highlighted some of the many events held on the Expo grounds each year.

Ruf asked the Committee members if they would like to tour some of these facilities as a committee.

Yerke stated the tours would be beneficial, especially when there is an issue on the table. Jeskewitz stated he has always found the tours informative and helpful in the past. Ruf stated that perhaps future meetings would be held offsite and followed up by a tour.

Appointment of a LUPE member to the SE Area Land & Water Conservation Association

Lindquist stated Supervisor Pauline Jaske had previously served as the LUPE member of the SE Area Land & Water Conservation Association. He stated that under the current SE Area bylaws, each county has two voting representatives; one staff (Lindquist) and one LUPE Committee member. The group sponsors an annual conservation bus tour in the fall. The tentative date for the 2008 fall tour is September 17. There are usually only 2-3 meetings (about 2 hours each), and they are usually held in Waukesha County.

Ruf asked Rolfs if he would be the LUPE Committee representative. In the absence of objections, Ruf appointed Rolfs as the new representative to the SE Area Land & Water Conservation Association.

MOTION: Kolb moved, second by Jeskewitz to adjourn the meeting at 10:19 a.m. Motion carried 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Jeskewitz
Secretary